



House Built By William Ewing, at Ewington, Ohio, 1812.



ENOCH EWING, 1799-1885.

VA.-O.-MICH.

XI.

CAPTAIN JAMES EWING.

The Ewing family of Pocahontas County and vicinity was founded by James Ewing, born near Londonderry, Ireland, of Scotch parents, about 1720. He came to Virginia as a young man, and there married Margaret Sargent, of Irish birth, who bore him five children: Jennie, who married Clendennin, Susan who married Moses Moore, Elizabeth who married George Dougherty, John, and William. John was born in 1747. At the time of the Clendennin massacre in Greenbrier County, John, a mere lad, was taken prisoner by the Indians, and carried into the Ohio country. There he was adopted into an Indian tribe, baptized according to Indian custom, and given an Indian name. But John's Scotch-Irish blood was not easily converted to Indian, and when a returning party of warriors brought back as a curiosity an English Bible, he explained to them that it was the word of God. The Indians asked whether his God was an Indian or a white man, and when John answered that he was a white man, they would no longer listen to his reading the book.

John learned the Indian tongue, but he never loved the Indian. In his old age, at the mention of the word "Indian in his presence he would always say, "Curse and confound the Indian." He was released from captivity under a treaty with the Indians, probably in 1764, and delivered to the whites at Fort Pitt, from which point he made his way back to his old Virginia home. In 1774 he married Ann Smith, Irish. They had eleven children, namely: William, 1775-1858; Susannah Holcomb, 1766-; Hon. John Smith Ewing, 1778-1837; Janeat Howell, 1781-1855; Sarah Holcomb, 1782-1850; Ann Ewing, 1785-; Andrew, 1787-1868; Elizabeth; Nancy Mills, 1781-; Lydia Burris 1792-1872; Samuel, 1797-1855. The children of these gave John a list of grand children numbering sixty-five. In 1801, John emigrated from Pocahontas and located in Gallia County, Ohio, where he died in 1825. Of his family, his son William alone remained in Virginia, occupying lands on Stony Creek until the time of his death. John Smith Ewing represented his district in the Virginia Assembly in about 1812. Anselm T. Holcomb, son of Sarah, was a member of the Ohio Legislature. John Ewing, son of Andrew, and George Burris, son of Lydia, were members of the Missouri Legislature. Andrew, son of John S., was a member of the California Legislature.

John's living descendants are legion. They may be found in nearly every western state, and counted among the successful farmers, business men, and professional men of the country. Among them are John Ewing, lawyer, Grant City, Mo., Clay Ewing, York-

town, Kan., Jennie Sprouse, M. D. Greenvew, Ill., M. Howell Finnegan- New London, Mo., P. H. Holcomb, lawyer, Butler, Mo., S. C. Holcomb, lawyer, Yates Centre, Kan., A. T. Holcomb, Portsmouth, O., William Whitman, county clerk, Van West, O., S. G. Burnside, merchant, Kansas City, Mo., Sumner Ewing, teacher and author, Springfield, O., Mrs Homer McCray, Kendallville, Ind., Laura Dunning, Ingomar California.

The descendants of John Ewing reverently refer to him as "Indian John."

William Ewing, brother of "Indian John," was born in 1756. In 1774 he joined Arbuckle's company of militia, and pursued Chief Cornstalk and his braves to the Ohio River, where he participated in the famous battle of Point Pleasant. Here he was in the thickest of the fight, but came out without a scratch, narrowly escaping instant death. He had availed himself of the shelter of a sapling while firing at the redskins, when an excited comrade rushed up to the place pushing him from his shelter and occupying it himself. William was scarcely out of the way before his comrade was struck in the head by an Indian bullet and killed instantly. In after years he related that every time he took deliberate aim at an Indian in that battle his rifle flashed in the pan, and his Indian got away, but when he fired at random his gun never missed fire. If he killed an Indian he never knew it, but he tried his level best to avenge the capture of his sister Mrs Clendennin and his brother John.

In 1785 he married Mary McNeil, sister of Gabriel

McNeil, and daughter of Thomas McNeil. He settled on Swago Creek, near Buckeye, and was popularly known as "Swago Bill." It is said that he blazed a line of trees around the lands he selected, and afterwards had the tract patented. Once he was plowing when the alarm came that the Indians were preparing to attack the settlement. The shelter of the nearest fort was sought, but the Indians did not appear. After a few days of quiet, William ventured out to the farm, where he found everything about as he had left them, except that a brood of quails which had been hatched and mothered by a chicken had disappeared. On his return to the fort he shouldered his plow, thinking to hide it from the Indians in the woods. While proceeding through the woods he suddenly heard "thump, thump, thump," followed by "click, click, click," and turning to one side he saw three Indians behind a large log with their guns pointed at him. They had tried to shoot, but their powder was damp, and the guns had missed fire. William dropped his plow and started for the fort as fast as he could run, with the Indians after him. Going over a hill and into a gully, he suddenly changed his course, ran up the ravine a short distance and stopped, and shortly had the pleasure of seeing his pursuers trot by in the regular course. Ewing made his way to the fort in safety.

William and Mary Ewing were the parents of twelve children, all born on the Swago, near Buckeye, namely: Elizabeth Doddrell, 1787-1852; Thomas, 1788-1874; Jonathan, 1790-1850; William, 1792-; James, 1793-1824; John, 1795-; Sarah Wallace, 1797-1827;

Enoch, 1799-1885; Jacob, 1802-1878; Abram McNeel, 1804-1891; George, 1807-1883; Andrew, 1809-1885. The children of these gave William and Mary a list of grand children numbering eighty-one, twenty-two of whom are still living. In 1810. William and his family moved to Gallia County, Ohio, and the town of Ewington was named in their honor. Thomas served as Justice of the Peace for many years. Elizabeth, Thomas, William, James, John, Sarah, Abram, George, and Andrew lived and died in or near Gallia County. Jonathan and Jacob died in Hancock County, Ill., Enoch died in Hillsdale County, Mich., and Andrew died in Iowa. Mary McNeal Ewing, the mother, died in Mercer County, Mo., in 1858. Enoch Ewing and his family went to Michigan in 1853, and seven of his children are still living in that State, besides a host of grand children. William's descendants, like John's, are counted among the successful men of the country. Among them are Dr G. A. Ewing, Jackson, O.; Dr G. K. Ewing, Ewington, O.; Dr U. B. G. Ewing, Richmond, Ind.; Dr William Leonard, Fostoria, O.; Rev Thomas E. Peden, President Theological Seminary, Ayden, N. C.; Rev M. L. Peden, Temperance, Mich.; W. J. Aleshire, editor, Gibsonburg, O.; E. E. Aleshire, lawyer, Stanberry, Mo.; Levi Howell, civil engineer, Luray, Mo.; Frank P. McCarley, civil engineer, Pittsburg, Pa.; Hon. W. S. Matthews, President Insurance Company, Toledo, O., ex-member of the Ohio Legislature; E. B. Matthews, manufacturer, Jackson, O.; G. W. Ewing, Plymouth, Ill.; W. L. Ewing, Rutlege, Mo., J. K. Ewing, Port

Blakely, Wash.; John W., H. McK., James L., and Andrew A., of Camden, Mich.; E. C. White, White, Mich.; J. C. Jenkins, Cunningham, Kansas; Isaac Jenkins, White, Mich.; William H. Ewing, merchant, Camden, Mich.; I. E. Ewing, manufacturer, Reading, Mich.; W. J. Ewing, merchant, Kunkle, O.; Rev I. H. Ewing, Bristol, Ind.; J. C. Ewing, merchant, Pioneer. O.; L. P. Cravens, teacher, Lake City, Minn.; Ida M. Ewing, Pontoosuc, Ill.; A. L. Ewing, teacher, Wellston, O.; Smith H. Ewing, merchant, Frankfort, O.; John H. Ewing, county clerk, Gallipolis, O.; Rev Sadie P. Cooper, Detroit, Mich.; Prof. R. B. Ewing, Ewington, O.; Theresa Gilbert, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The compiler is indebted to Hon. A. E. Ewing, of Grand Rapids, Mich., for most of the material contained in this sketch. He is a great-grandson of "Swago Bill," a grandson of Enoch, and a son of Henry McK. Ewing. His mother was a Miss Hank, of Monroe County. He is a lawyer, and a member of the House of Representatives of Michigan in 1893.

Captain James Ewing, the founder of these families, died probably about the year 1800. He was captain of a company of militia in Augusta County during the Revolutionary war, and tradition asserts that he received a large tract of land in consideration of his services. Tradition makes him the hero of more than one occasion. One of especial interest is told of how he captured an outlaw by the name of Shockley, who was a terror to the country, and who had stolen James'

rifle from ever his cabin door. His descendants have reached to the eighth generation, and numerically have reached into the thousands. His Highland Scotch instinct made him to prefer the mountains to the plains, and it is probable that in his mountain home, surrounded by the perils of pioneer life, beset on the one hand by wild animals, and on the other by savage Indians, he found life quite to his liking.

His wife, it is said, lived to be one hundred years old.

IV.

CAPTURE OF THOMAS WILSON.

About 1750 John Wilson and Bowyer Miller located on Jacksons River, in what is now Highland County, Va. Mr Wilson settled at the mouth of Peak or Stony Run, while Miller located at Wilsonville, farther up. During Braddock's war Mr Miller refugeed to Tinkling Spring, and finally across the Blue Ridge, leaving land, house, and property uncared for.

About 1756 Mr Wilson refugeed near Greenville, taking his movable property with him, but finding it impossible to get subsistence, sent his horses and cattle back and employed some one to do the ranging and salting. We hear nothing more of him. In a year or two his family ventured to return and took up their abode on the east bank of the river, some two hundred yards perhaps below the crossing leading to the Bolar Spring. The Indians then raided their home about the year 1760.

This John Wilson, the pioneer, was the grandfather of the the late William Wilson, whose daughters Charlotte and Susan married Adam and Washington Stephenson, citizens of Highland County.

The morning of the raid John Wilson, one of the sons, had gone to Fort Lewis on the Cowpasture to invite hands to assist in raising the house recently occupied by Mrs Washington Stephenson. In the meanwhile Mrs Wilson and her daughters Barbara and Susan were very busy in preparations for the raising, and were cooking and washing on the east bank of the river near the cabin. Thomas Wilson, a younger son, was at the mill grinding the needed corn meal. The mill stood near the crossing of the Warm Run leading to the residence of the late David Stephenson.

Upon John's return late in the evening as he came in sight of home he was fired upon by Indians. One ball passed under his arm pit and tore the fringe off his hunting shirt. Mounted on a fleet horse he turned instantly to return to the fort whence he had just come and was soon out of sight of the Indians. While going at full speed through the gap a limb knocked his hat off. He stopped and picked it up at the peril of his life. This person was the father of the William Wilson already mentioned, and of the late Mrs Esther Bolar near the Warm Springs.

Upon reaching the fort he told what had happened and begged for assistance at once. None were willing to venture that night. The captain then ordered a draft for a detachment. It was very late in the night before the detail reached the summit of Jack Mountain overlooking the valley. It was dark, no light save that of the summer stars, and in the valley this light was obscured by a dense fog. With sad forebodings they began the descent into the darkness of the ravine

beneath, through which they were to grope their way, and where their young guide had been fired on and pursued by the wily enemy. They cautiously moved down the mountain, quietly passed through the gap—all on foot except their guide John Wilson. At the gap he dismounted, hung up his saddle and bridle, and turned the jaded horse out to graze in the woods. He also advised his friends to leave the path, cross the Warm Run, and pass down the right bank by a circuitous way to the mill to see whether it was running or not. "If it be running," says John Wilson, "it is a bad sign, for then I know the Indians have surprised Brother Tom and killed him, because they would not know how to stop the mill. But if it is not running there is some hope, for he may have seen the Indians, stopped the mill and made his escape, for I know no Indian can catch him by running."

The mill was found to be silent. Young Wilson entered it quietly and found everything in place, and the newly ground sack of meal was at the chest, securely tied. Taking hope from this, the rescuing party crossed the river just above the mouth of the Warm Run, and passed over the bottom to the knoll on which the church stands, and thence moved with the greatest caution in the direction of the dwelling on the opposite side of the river.

Upon reaching the camp just opposite the cabin, John Wilson advised the men to remain there until he could wade over and find out what had happened. If all was well he could call them over, but if the cabin had been destroyed or occupied by the Indians he

would return and determine on what would be best to do. When he approached the dwelling he found the doors heavily barricaded, but through a well known crevice he discovered the family was yet there. Thereupon he gave the signal, and his friends hastened over in all the transports of exulting joy, so great was their relief from the long and powerful suspense they had been in for so many hours.

The mother and her daughter Barbara had been wounded by the clubs or tomahawks of the Indians, but not fatally injured, Susan had escaped unhurt. It was found that none but Tom Wilson was missing. The last thing known of him he was at the mill. Upon going to the mill early in the morning, the party found his track, and that he had been running. This they followed until they found where Tom had stepped on a stick, had fallen, been overtaken and captured. The Indians were trailed from that point across the river to the bluff near the residence of the late Michael Wise. Thence they went southwest to a point about a mile below where the church now stands. There they remained some time, as the signs indicated. From that point they were traced back to Peak's Run, up which they went.

Tom's sister Susan took the lead in all this search for Tom. She was well nigh frantic with grief. At frequent times she would cry out as she went in advance of the party by fifteen or twenty yards: "Here are my poor brother's tracks."

Upon reaching the top of Back Creek Mountain, it was thought best to go no further, as fourteen men

could do nothing with so many savages as the signs indicated. It was with great difficulty that Susan could be prevailed on to return. For years nothing was heard of Tom. He died of fever soon after his capture. We hear nothing of John Wilson, the father, as he does not appear to have been at home.

The writer is indebted to the late John Cleek, Esq., for the material for this and other sketches.

Information was received concerning Tom Wilson in the following manner.

David Kincaid, who had been one of the fourteen rescuers, went with an expedition sent to treat with the Indians at Fort Pitt concerning the ransom of prisoners. A treaty was made and a day appointed for giving up all in captivity. That day passed away and no prisoners were brought in as agreed. It looked suspicious, and that night every precaution against surprise was taken, lest the Indians should prove hostile and treacherous, but nothing occurred as feared.

The next day was nearly spent, when late in the evening a little girl ten years of age was brought in. She could speak nothing but Indian dialect, and could tell nothing about herself. Mr Kincaid's wife and three children had been taken prisoners about the time Tom Wilson was taken. He remembered one of the children had lost a thumb. Upon examination it was found as he had stated, and the recognition of father and child was of the most touching character. The next evening Mrs Kincaid was brought in, whereupon

husband, wife, and the only surviving child were reunited.

Mrs Kincaid could tell all about that which had happened to Tom Wilson. He had just finished his task at the mill, and was on the way to the house, when he discovered the Indians, who were coming down the east bank of the river. Wishing to take him alive they headed him off, and he took up the river and was caught. They wished also not to alarm the women at work near the dwelling, nor the men at work on the west bank near where the new house was to be reared, getting in the logs and hewing them.

Tom and the other prisoners were taken to a place some distance away. They were securely bound and left in the charge of an old Indian, while the rest should return and capture the parties already referred to. In this they failed, and all escaped to the house, though some were slightly wounded by the tomahawks thrown at them. The doors were barricaded, and the Indians repulsed without taking any captives.

John Wilson having made his escape on horseback, the Indians supposed he would soon return with men from the fort, and so they did not press the siege, but started immediately for their towns and were miles away ere John returned.

Thomas did not survive his captivity very long.

John Wilson said he had great difficulty in persuading the family to give up the house raising and go to the fort until it was certain all danger for the time being was over. John also reports that among the wounded, besides his mother and sister Barbara, was

an Irish weaver whose name is forgotten. At the time the attack was made he was weaving in an out house. During the melee an Indian came upon him and drew his gun. The Irishman fell forward on his face just as the trigger was pulled, the ball inflicting a wound on his hip.

When the relief party came in the night, and the question was asked "is anybody killed?" the Irishman quickly responded: "An faith, there is nobody killed but meself!"

The writer is also under obligations to Squire John Cleek for the following items:

A fight occurred between the whites and Indians at Cunningham's fields, near Harpers, head of Kerr's Creek. The Indians are reported by tradition to have carried their dead to the summit of the mountain and buried them under the stones now found near the roadside on the way from Rockbridge Alum to Lexington.

The first settlement on the Bullpasture River, in Highland, was made near the Blue Spring, known as the Lockridge farm, by the Hicklins and Estills. The Grahams and Carlyles the next farms higher up the river. Pullin, a native of Ireland, settled above Carlyle. A good many of these settlers sold out and moved to Kentucky, and some of them prospered greatly in their western homes.



Sgt. John Ray Williams "Chipper" of the United States Army, died of wounds in combat action on November 29, 1968, in Vietnam. He would have been 22 years old on January, 27, 1969. He was a member of Company A, second Battalion, second Infantry of the first Infantry Division. He was inducted into the service September 15.

He was the son of
Mrs. Nellie E. Will-
iams of Marlinton, and
the late Dyrllie W.
Williams.

Besides his mother
he is survived by
two half sisters, Mrs.
Libby Rexrode of Mar-
linton, and Mrs. Mar-
guerite Doig of Lin-
coln, R. I., and a
host of other rela-
tives.

At the time of his
induction he was a
junior at West Vir-

where he was a member of Lamda Chi fraternity, and the WVU Marching Band. A graduate of Marlinton High School where he also played in the band for six years including two years in Junior High.

He had been a member of the Marlinton Methodist Church since he was eleven.

He has belonged to 4-H Club

He had been a member of the Marlinton Methodist Church since he was eleven.

He has belonged to 4-H Club and Boy Scouts and was well-known over the County having worked for The County Agent's office and Youth Science Camp during the summer while attending the University.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete

and his children accomplished in opening up abundant homes, under difficulties, is truly remarkable and worthy of special appreciation. He loved to hunt, and on one occasion came near being killed by a panther from which he escaped with difficulty.

Mr Auldridge, owing to his disabled condition, became a school teacher, and pursued that vocation for years, and did much good in that line. When he died at an advanced age several years since, the common remark was that one of our best old men had gone from us.

CHRISTOPHER HEROLD.

Among the prosperous citizens of Pocahontas County in its early development, Christopher Herold deserves recognition of a special character. He was of pure German parentage—his immediate ancestry came from the Fatherland, settling in Pennsylvania, thence removing to Virginia. Though he could not read English, no one would have suspected it, so well posted he seemed to be in political matters and current affairs. His powers of memory were surprising, and his business sagacity was equal to any of his contemporaries. He was honest and enterprising. He and his sons accumulated an immense landed estate on Elk, Douthards Creek, and other places, amounting to many thousands acres.

Christopher Herold married Elizabeth Cook, of Pendleton County, and soon after their marriage located on Back Creek, now known as the Thomas

Campbell place. From Back Creek, Highland County, he migrated to Douthards Creek, about seventy-six years ago, and bought of Colonel John Baxter, and settled on lands now held by Henry White and sons and Henry Sharp, on Douthards Creek. On this place Mr and Mrs Herold reared their family and passed the residue of their lives. Their family consisted of seven sons and three daughters: Susan, Jane, Elizabeth Ann, Henry, Peter, Benjamin, Charles, Christopher, Andrew, and Josiah.

Susan Herold was married to Philip Moyers, and settled in Upshur County.

Jane was the wife of Captain John Buzzard, who lived in Huntersville several years. He managed a hotel, was Captain of the "Light Horse" company, and finally moved to Missouri.

Elizabeth Ann married Samuel Hogsett, Junior, and settled in Harrison County, where her family now live. Mr Hogsett died, and she was afterwards married to Mr Sapp.

Henry, the eldest of the pioneer's sons, married Elizabeth Lockridge and settled at Driscoll, and after living there a number of years, moved to Nicholas County. Their sons were Anderson, Washington, William, and Benjamin. Wise Herold, now living on Knapps Creek, is a son of Washington. Henry Herold's daughter Elizabeth married a McClung, in Nicholas County; and another daughter Maria was married to John McClintic at Frankford, W. Va.

Peter Herold married Catherine Snyder, of Highland; settled on the Red Lick branch of Elk, where he

died, and his family afterwards went to Missouri, whither they had been preceded by Daniel Herold, a son of Peter.

Benjamin Herold, a very prominent citizen in his time, was married to Mary Boone of Franklin County, and for several years lived at Driscoll. He bought out his brothers, Andrew and Josiah, and thereafter resided at the homestead. Finally he moved to Missouri. Benjamin's sons were, Charles, Joseph, Peter, and the daughters were Eugenia, Mary, and Lucy.

Christopher Herold's fourth son, Charles, died when about grown.

His fifth son, Christopher, Junior, married Sally Ann Hefner, daughter of Samuel Hefner of Anthonys Creek, and lived on the homestead, where both died, leaving a daughter, Sally Ann, who married Mr Waggoner of Webster County.

The sixth son, Andrew, married Maria Seybert, daughter of Joseph Seybert, and lived some years on the old homestead, and then purchased near Frost, where he now resides.

Andrews's family numbered nine sons and two daughters: Mrs Ida Rebecca Moore, Myrta, Lanty W., Millard F., Joseph, died aged eight; Isaac Newton, now in Missouri; John L., Edwin L., Horace F., in Highland; Andrew Forrest and Pruyn Patterson, deceased.

The seventh son of Christopher Herold, Sr., Josiah Herold, married Mary Ann Cleek, of Knapps Creek, and located on Stony Creek, upon the farm occupied by the family of the late James McClure. Deeming it

best to refugee during the war, he went to Mr Cleek's. There he was seized with diptheria in a malignant form, and he and his two little sons died.

To illustrate something of the privations endured by this worthy man and family in their efforts to make their way in the world, mention may be made of what occurred in the winter of 1840.

Andrew, then about grown, was sent to Elk to look after some cattle to be wintered there. A snow fell, early in the winter, between four and five feet in depth. The only chance to keep the cattle alive was to fell timber for browse. How to have this done was the problem that confronted the youth. Having procured the services of Joe Courtney, a man of stalwart form and needful pluck, they started for the browsing ground. Courtney went ahead, and the young man followed in his trail, snow up to the arm pits. They managed to cut what carried the cattle through.

In the meanwhile all communication between neighbors seemed cut off. Andrew's brother, Peter Herold had taken sick and died before he could hear of it. James Gibson, Senior, now living on Elk, managed to reach an eminence in hearing of the browsing party, and by the loudest tones he could command got Andrew to understand what had taken place. The funeral rites were performed under difficulties indescribable.

The winter finally passed away, and when Andrew returned home in the spring he was emaciated and changed in appearance almost beyond recognition by his neighbors.

When this venerated man---Christopher Herold---

died some years ago, he was verging ninety years. He and his faithful wife sleep in the family burial ground near their last home on earth, the scene of much of their life's toils and mutual joys and sorrows.

DANIEL KERR.

Acknowledgements are due Samuel Sutton and Mrs Harvey Curry, near Dunmore, for the following items that may rescue from oblivion the memory of a very worthy and useful pioneer of upper Pocahontas. This was Daniel Kerr, who located soon after the Revolution on the upper end of the immense estate now owned by Uriah Hevener.

It seems very probable he came from Rockbridge County. He established a mill, saw mill, and blacksmith shop on the Little Back Creek branch of Deer Creek, and his place became a centre of industry for a wide region.

He was married twice. The first wife was a Miss Kirkpatrick, of Anthonys Creek. Their children were Robert, John, William, Thomas, and James. Daniel Kerr's second wife was a Miss McKamie, of Rockbridge, a very sprightly and attractive person. Her children were David, Daniel, Nancy, Betsy and Mary.

He was a sincerely pious person, and the close of his life was very touching. He had assembled his family for domestic worship. Upon finishing the Scripture lesson he kneeled for prayer, and for a long interval he was silent. Upon going to him in that

Colonel William Craig

Mountain Man and First Permanent Settler in Idaho

By D. B. Kraybill

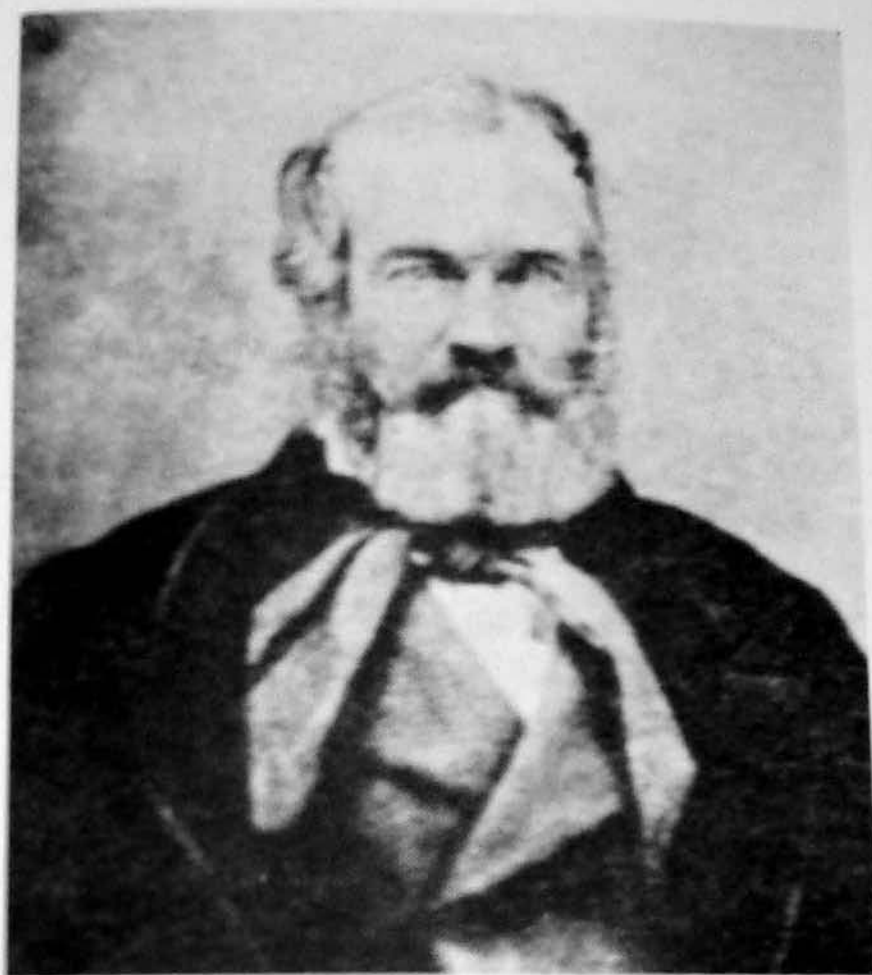
In the late summer of 1954, I made a survey of the school district of Sandpoint, Idaho in connection with my duties as a Field Representative of the Office of Education. I was eager to get to know the history of the five Mountain States of Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and Colorado, which constituted the territory I was serving. The business manager of Sandpoint School District gave me a copy of the *History of the State of Idaho*¹ which was used in the schools and in this book I found the following brief statement about Colonel William Craig:

Idaho's first permanent white settler was Colonel William Craig. Born in Greenbrier County, Virginia, in 1807, he cast his lot with the Rocky Mountain trappers in the summer of 1829. During the romantic fur-trading third decade of the last century, he, with his intimate associates, Robert Newell and Joseph Meek, led the wild, free life of the fur hunter. Shortly after the arrival of the Reverend H. H. Spalding at Lapwai (1836) Colonel Craig selected a home near the mission on Lapwai Creek. The records show that he established a permanent residence in Idaho in the fall of 1846. In harmony with the provisions of the Oregon Donation Act of 1850, he and his Nez Perce wife, Isabel, claimed and patented 640 acres of land at Lapwai. During the winter of 1855-1856 he rendered distinguished aid to Governor I. I. Stevens while the latter was negotiating a series of Indian treaties. So conspicuous was his leadership among the Nez Perce's that he was given a place on Governor Steven's staff with the title of Lieutenant-Colonel.

During the winter of 1858-1859 he was postmaster at Walla Walla, where he resided temporarily. He was the first Indian Agent at Lapwai and was influential politically during the early years of the Territory. He died in 1869 and was buried at Lapwai.

Contact with the historians of the Far West educational institutions and research into the literature of the fur trading era in the Far West, including many biographies of Mountain Men or Free Trappers, has led to the following findings: (1) Little is known of Colonel Craig's early life. At age 17, he is reputed to have killed a neighbor in self defense and then

¹ C. J. Bowman, *History of the State of Idaho*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, p. 111.



COLONEL WILLIAM CRAIG

(Courtesy of Nellie B. Pipes, Oregon Historical Society). A reprint from *The Colorado Magazine* (Sept. 1934), publication of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

fled to the west. He would never speak of his life in Greenbrier County Virginia, now West Virginia. (2) From the biographies of some of the Mountain Men such as Kit Carson, Robert Newell, Joseph Meek, Jim Bridger, Old Bill Williams and others, we hear of him repeatedly and know that he was on many hunting and trapping expeditions during the hey-day of the trappers—from the middle twenties to the early forties. He was with Joe Walker who was assigned, by Captain Bonneville, to lead an expedition to explore Great Salt Lake. (3) Craig, together with Thompson and Sinclair, owned Fort Davy Crockett,² built in Brown's Hole in northwestern Colorado. It was located on the left bank of the Green River, above the mouth of Vermillion Creek. (4) Colonel Craig was a respected and influential citizen in the early days of Idaho Territory. Craig Mountain in Idaho is named after him. There is a Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution in Lewiston, Idaho, known as William Craig Chapter Number 2. This chapter took upon itself the task of securing funds to erect a suitable marker at the grave of Craig. His resting place is at Jaques Spur, near the mouth of Mission Creek, Idaho. The grave is in plain sight of the North and South Highway.

Craig's Early Life

References to the year of birth of Craig vary from the years 1800 to 1807. All references to his place of birth give Greenbrier County, Virginia. Nicholas County, West Virginia was formed January 29, 1818, by act of the General Assembly of Virginia, mainly from Kanawha County but included a small area from Greenbrier and Randolph Counties. The establishment of Fayette County (1831), Braxton County (1836), Clay County (1858), and Webster County (1860), successively altered the boundary of Nicholas County.³ Descendants of William Craig, a Covenanter, from Ulster, Ireland who first moved to Pennsylvania (1721) and later to Augusta County, Virginia, settled finally in Greenbrier County, Virginia (now West Virginia) above Spring Creek. Robert Craig, of this family, came to Nicholas County in 1837 and located on what is now the Fielding Herold farm.⁴

² Lewis R. Nelson, "Fort Davy Crockett, Its Fort Men and Visitors", *Colorado Magazine*, January, 1924, p. 171.

³ William Griffith Brown, *History of Nicholas County*, (1884), pp. 1, 2, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

Whether our subject, William Craig, was of a family that had moved to Nicholas County or of a family remaining in Greenbrier County, further researches will have to determine. It is likely that he actually grew up in what is now Greenbrier County, West Virginia. If we take 1807 as his year of birth and age 17 or 18 (both ages are found recorded) as his age when leaving for the west, he would have left about the year 1825. This was 12 years prior to the first Craig coming to Nicholas County.

We here submit two brief accounts of his early life that vary only slightly in dates and the nature of his earliest activity in the west. Robert G. Bailey gives the following account:

The authenticated story of Colonel Craig begins with his appearance in St. Louis in 1818. St. Louis at that time was the headquarters of the American fur traders, who were seeking to oust the Hudson Bay trappers of the Northwest. Craig joined one of the outfits, composed of American traders, or French Canadians, as they were popularly known, and accompanied them in bateaus [sic] to what is now Fort Benton, Missouri. Here he left his trader friends and joined forces with a number of trappers, who were headed for the Rocky Mountains. In time he became a full fledged trapper. The main rendezvous for the trappers was at Fort Bridger, Wyoming. It was here that Craig first met the Nez Perces, who told him of the large quantities of fur to be had in what is now Central Idaho. Later, Craig, Meek, and Robert Newell accompanied a party of Nez Perce Indians to their home section where they engaged in trapping on the waters of the Clearwater and Salmon. The date of this expedition is given as of 1829. On this trip each of the trappers got himself a Nez Perce wife, and with them returned to their rendezvous east of the Rocky Mountains. Craig had an adventurous career and for ten years after his marriage roamed the western country from Wyoming to the Pacific Ocean. He was a member of the Walker expedition to California (1833-1834).²

In the *Colorado Magazine*, September, 1934, Leroy R. Hafen gives us the following account:

Of William Craig's early life we know but little. He was born in Greenbrier County of the 'Old Dominion', as he called his native state (Virginia), about 1799 or 1800. At the age of 18 he quarreled with a man much older than himself and killed him in self defense. Alarmed at this act, he went to St. Louis; here in this emporium of the fur trade, he joined a party of

² Robert G. Bailey, *River of No Return*, (1947) p. 47.

French Canadian trappers bound for the upper Missouri. With bateaus [sic] they made the long, arduous journey to the vicinity of the present Fort Benton, then moved south into the mountains. Craig left the Canadians, joined American trappers and became a full fledged Mountain Man.⁶

So far, we have found no clear references to Craig, as a trapper, until 1829 when he joined the expedition under Smith, Jackson, and Sublette. The party of 54 trappers recruited by William Sublette left St. Louis March 17, 1829 and headed for the Rocky Mountains. It may well be that up to that time he was with the trappers operating in the upper Missouri. General William H. Ashley spearheaded the trading and trapping expeditions in that area from 1822 to 1826 when he sold out to Smith, Jackson, and Sublette.

Craig as Free Trapper and Mountain Man

It should be remembered that prior to the hey-day of the Mountain Men or Free Trappers, the southwestern part of what is now United States and most of what we speak of as Rocky Mountain Area, was Spanish Territory. There was not yet a settlement of boundary line in the disputed Oregon Country. In 1821 the Independent Republic of Mexico was established. In 1822 Mexico reversed the traditional Spanish policy and threw open the doors of New Mexico to American trade. In 1825 the state of Coahuila-Texas, of which Texas was a district, adopted a land law which opened the state to all Christians of good moral and personal habits who would swear allegiance to Mexico. Little wonder, then, that the decade beginning about 1820 saw enterprising and venturesome souls, from the East, beginning a trek to the West to open up trade. This, too, was the day of the Beaver Hat. The stage was set for the Western Trader and Trapper. The outpost of Toas, New Mexico, was the jumping-off point for trappers operating in the southwest. St. Louis was the starting point for those heading for the Northern Rockies and the Upper Missouri.

There was ushered into existence a new breed of men: The "free trappers" or "mountain men" as they called themselves. These individuals are aptly described by Enid Johnson in his biography of Bill Williams:

⁶ Larry R. Haden, "Mountain Man-William Craig", *The Colorado Magazine*, September, 1928, Vol. XI, No. 3, p. 171.

The true pathfinders of the West were the Mountain Men; they were the hardy adventurers who wandered over the unknown deserts and mountains of the West in their search for beaver and to trade with the Indians. So they were called 'Mountain Men'.

From the early 1800's to 1850 they roamed far and wide over the West adventuring into its lonely places, discovering its hidden trails, marching with the sun to the last frontier. Each footstep beset with danger from wild beasts, hostile Indians, hunger, cold, thirst, and many accidents.

It was they who first explored and established the routes to travel which are now and ever will be the avenues of commerce in that region.

The moving force in their lives was an intense love for the freedom of the wilderness. The mountain man knew that he would have to walk alone, relying upon himself, working and fighting on his own hook.⁷

William Craig was identified with these Mountain Men at least from 1829 to 1840 when he settled near Lapwai, Idaho with his Nez Perce Indian wife, Isabel.

In her biography of Joe Meek, Mrs. F. F. Victor sets forth the following incidents involving Craig:

In the fall of 1829, while employed in William Sublette's trapper band, Craig became acquainted with a fellow Virginian, Joseph L. Meek. One day Craig, Meek, and Nelson were traveling up a creek on foot to tend their traps, when they came suddenly upon a red bear. The three men ran for trees. Craig and Meek climbed a large pine, but Nelson took to one of two small trees that grew close together. The bear followed Nelson. With his back against one tree and his feet against the other the bear climbed almost to Nelson's perch. When the trees separated with the bear's weight and he fell to the ground, the bear tried a second time with the same result. With his third fall the beast gave up in disgust and ambled away.

'Then', says Meek, 'Craig began to sing and I began to laugh, but Nelson took to swearing'. 'Oh, yes, you can laugh and sing now', says Nelson, 'but you were quiet enough when the bear was around'. 'Why, Nelson', Meek answered, 'you wouldn't have us noisy before that distinguished guest of yours'. 'But Nelson damned the wild beast and Craig and I laughed and said he didn't seem wild a bit.'⁸

⁷ Earl Johnson, *Bill Williams*—Julian Messner, Inc., N. Y. Foreword.
⁸ F. F. Victor, *The River of the West*, pp. 11-12.

Meek also tells this story on Craig. An incident that happened in the winter of 1829-1830:

While the trappers were crossing the mountains between the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers, game was scarce and provisions were nearly exhausted. Craig managed to catch a rabbit and put it up to roast before the fire—a tempting looking morsel to starving mountaineers. Some of his associates determined to see how it tasted, and Craig was told that the Booshways (a corruption of the word Bourgeois, the bosses, or leaders of the expedition) wished to speak to him at their lodge. While he obeyed this supposed command, the rabbit was spirited away, never more to be seen by mortal man. When Craig returned to the campfire, and beheld the place vacant where the rabbit was so nicely roasting, his passion knew no bounds, and he declared his intention of cutting it out of the stomach that contained it. But as finding the identical stomach which contained it involved the cutting open of many that probably did not, in the search, he was fain to relinquish that mode of vengeance, together with his hopes of supper.⁹

Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, a West Point graduate, who had become infected with the frontier fever, had secured the financial backing of a wealthy New Yorker and had come west in 1832 with 110 men. His experiences since that time had hardly been of the sort to delight his patron. The elaborately planned Fort Bonneville that he built in the Green River Valley was abandoned almost as soon as completed, while his brigades had been so handicapped by his inexperienced leadership that their catch in furs was small. Still clinging to hopes of a fortune, he ordered one of his bands of mountaineers westward at the close of the 1833 rendezvous, with instructions to search the barren lands beyond Great Salt Lake for likely hunting grounds. This was the expedition that gave its leader, Joseph Reddeford Walker, an opportunity to earn his niche among the pathfinders of the American West.

No pains or expense were spared in fitting out this party of forty men which he was to command. They had complete supplies for a year, and were to meet Captain Bonneville in the ensuing summer, in the Valley of Bear River, the largest tributary of Salt Lake, which was to be his point of general rendezvous.¹⁰

⁹ F. F. Voth, *The River of the West*, p. 18.
¹⁰ Washington Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U. S. A.*, The
Cooperative Publication Society, Inc., (New York and London), p. 160.

A description of this expedition is given in various biographies of men who were among the 40 who made the journey. The accounts vary. According to Joe Meek they passed through what is now Yosemite National Park. We are here setting forth a brief account of the expedition as found in *The Far Western Frontier* by Ray Allen Billington:

Walker's men skirted the north shore of the Great Salt Lake, found their way through the wild land of rocks and sand that lay beyond, followed the well-trapped Humboldt River to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and crossed this awesome barrier where swirling snow and icy winds reduced even the seasoned hunters to near desparation, [sic] to emerge at last amidst the warmth of the San Juaquin Valley of California. Pushing on to San Francisco, the party turned southward along the coast to Monterey, where they spent the winter of 1833-34. In mid-February Walker took the trail once more, moving south along the San Juaquin Valley to Kern River, which was followed eastward into the low defile since known as Walker Pass. There the hunters turned to skirt the Sierras as they marched through Owens Valley and across parched deserts where they nearly died of thirst. In June they picked up their own trail which led them back along the Humboldt in time to reach the 1834 rendezvous at Ham's Fork of the Green River.¹¹

William Craig, with other independent trappers, was among the 40 men who joined the Joe Walker expedition to California. A story pertaining to it which Craig told to Thomas J. Beall after they met in Idaho in 1857 is here repeated:

The waters of the Humboldt River are of a milky cast, not clear. So one afternoon, while camped on the said stream, and being the first to strip, I started for the swimming hole and was just about to plunge in when I got a hunch that things were not as they should be and I had better investigate before taking a dive. I did so and found the water was about a foot and a half deep and the mud four, this condition being in the eddy. So I waded to where there was a current and found the water a little more than waist deep, no mud and good smooth bottom. In looking toward the camp I espied Joe Walker coming and he was jumping like a buck deer and when he arrived at the brink he says to me: 'How is it?' 'Joe,' I replied, 'It is just splendid.' With that he plunged head first into that four and a half feet of blue mud.

Fearing trouble and not being interested in the subsequent proceedings, I made myself scarce by hiding in the brush on

¹¹ Ray Allen Billington, *The Far Western Frontier 1800-1860*, Harper and Brothers, p. 80.

the opposite side and in so doing I ran into some rosebrier bushes and scratched myself some, but I was so full of laughter I did not mind that. I peeped through the bushes just in time to see him extricate himself from the mud. He then washed the mud off as well as he could, returned to the tepee, put on his clothes, shot his rifle off, cleaned it, then reloaded it and hollered at me, and said: 'Now show yourself and I'll drop a piece of lead into you' which I failed to do, as I did not want to be encumbered with any extra weight, especially at that time. I was compelled to remain in hiding most of the afternoon. Before sundown I was told to come into camp and get my supper and leave, that I could not travel any further with that party.

I was very glad of the permit for it was rather monotonous out there in the brush with nothing but a blanket around me and nobody to talk to and my pipe in camp. I soon dressed myself and then it was time to chew. Our company was divided into messes and each mess was provided with a dressed buffalo hide. It was spread on the ground and the grub placed upon it. When supper was announced we sat down. I sat opposite to Walker and in looking at him discovered some of the blue mud of the Humboldt on each side of his nose and just below his eyelids, and I could not help laughing. He addressed me in an abrupt manner and said: 'What the h--l are you laughing at?' I told him that gentlemen generally washed before eating. With that the others observed the mud and they too roared with laughter in which Walker joined, but he threatened if ever I played another such trick on him he would kill me as sure as my name was Craig. This place on the Humboldt River was ever afterwards called by the mountain men 'Walker's Plunge' or 'Hole'.

Craig characterized the Walker expedition as more of a horse-stealing than a fur-trapping expedition. He says that they got away with 500 to 600 horses, which they traded to the Indians on the way back to the Rocky Mountains.¹²

In his biography of Joe Meek, in Chapter VI, "The Exciting Year of 1832", Harvey E. Tobie has the following reference to Craig:

Late in the fall, Meek, Craig and a few other hunters joined the northern party of which Newell was a member, on an exchange of men. On the Madison River they were again within a few miles of their Tagging American Fur Company rivals. For several days disagreeable weather and mud underfoot kept both groups from moving; but story-telling, card playing and other amusements helped the fraternizing men while away hours that would otherwise have been tedious.

¹² Thomas J. Hall, "Recollections of William Craig", in Lewiston (Idaho) Tribune, March 2, 1914.

Those ahead had the best hunting, and the Rocky Mountain men broke camp October 11. Three days later, Vanderburgh, moving in the opposite direction, met his death in an Indian attack. Fitzpatrick's men were also subjected to Indian annoyance which Newell noted briefly: 'Met some Blackfeet, 60 warriors, made peace with them and the next day fought another party. Returned to Salmon River and took up winter's quarters.'¹³

Bernard DeVoto in *Across The Wide Missouri* gives a detailed description of the fur trading expedition led by Jim Bridger in 1838. The Bridger brigade met with a group of missionaries on their way to the Oregon Country. Meek, Newell, Joe Walker, and Craig were with the expedition and the paragraph that we here quote shows that Mrs. Craig was with him. The rendezvous was at the Popo Agie not far west of Fort Laramie:

While their husbands tinkered with the outfit, the ladies (missionaries' wives) moved New England to the Popo Agie by setting up a sewing circle. Humble, frantically inquisitive squaws hung round them in platoons, touching them to see the blood move under this odd white skin, inspecting the mysterious articles in their personal outfit, fingering unheard of things like brooches and hartshorns and pancake turners. The white squaws had odd, but admirable equipment for dressmaking; thimbles, emery bags in the shape of strawberries, needles of many sizes but all small to Indian eyes, darning eggs, embroidery frames, threads of all sizes and colors, yarns, silk flosses. They could do no finer work with these tools than the red ladies did with awls and split sinews but they could work with stupefying ease and speed. So the squaws sighed and chattered and brought the ladies the bright cottons their husbands had been buying for them at the trading booths and the ladies made dresses for them unquestionably longer in the skirts than Indian fashion prescribed. Myra mentions Mrs. Joe Walker and Mrs. Craig; Mary, Mrs. Robinson. Craig was an old Rocky Mountain Fur Company man; there were numerous Robinsons. Others are mentioned in quantity but not named. Myra sniffs at the mean quality of the cloth and is scandalized by its cost of two dollars a yard.¹⁴

This reference in DeVoto's book seems to be in harmony with what Francis Haines quotes in his book *The Nez Percés* relative to Craig's wife. But the marriage to Isabel, in 1838, would not be in harmony with the statement by Bailey in his *River of No Return* (Note 5) which has Craig getting himself

¹³ Harvey E. Taylor, *Be Man Like Joe*, Portland, Oregon, pp. 31, 32.

¹⁴ Bernard DeVoto, *Across The Wide Missouri*, Houghton Mifflin Company, p. 253.

Affidavit

of setting up unappropriated lands, claiming under the 4th section
of Act of 27th September 1850, and the amendments thereto

William Craig of Walla Walla County in the Territory
of Washington, being first duly sworn, says that he is a
white male in the full & sound in said Territory, and that
he arrived in Oregon on the 25th day of July A.D. 1849 -
that he is a native born citizen of the United States -
that he was born in Greenbrier County in the State of Virginia
in the year 1807, that he has personally viewed upon and
cultivated that part of the Public Land in the Territory
aforesaid, and particularly described in the annexed re-
turn to the Register and Receiver of said Territory, extending
from the 15th Sept 1848 to the 4th day of June A.D. 1855, and
he further says, that he is intermarried with Beata Craig
his wife, and that he was legally married to her on the
4th day of July A.D. 1835 in Madison Territory and that children
Joseph born Sept 10th 1836 Martha born Oct 25th 1838
Isabella " Aug 5th 1841 Mary " Aug 20th 1843
Susan " June 11th 1845

William Craig

Subscribed and sworn to
before me, this 4th day of June
A.D. 1855

Henry S. Crocker
Clerk of said Court
Charles W. Smith

Note that this affidavit establishes Craig's birthdate as 1807 in Green-
brier County in the State of Virginia.

a wife in 1829. We know that Craig visited the Nez Perce Country in 1829 and, at that time, could have met Isabel, but his affidavit relative to "Settlers on Unassigned Lands" in Washington Territory (National Archives, Washington, D. C.) gives July 6, 1838 as the date of his marriage and September 10, 1840 the date of birth of their first child. The reference by Haines follows:

In 1838, at the Wyoming rendezvous, Craig married Isabel, daughter of Chief James of Lapwai. Two years later, in the summer of 1840, he helped Robert Newell and Joe Meek take two wagons from Fort Hall to Walla Walla for Marcus Whitman. Soon after that, he and his wife appeared at her father's village on Lapwai Creek, where Craig began farming a tract of bottom land near the Spalding Mission. When Spalding objected, saying that he needed all that land for the mission farm, Craig moved farther up the Creek. In 1846, he secured a government deed to his farm, the first deeded land in Idaho.¹⁵

Fort Davy Crockett—Its Owners and Visitors

Numerous references to Fort Davy Crockett give Craig, along with Thompson and Sinclair as the owners. Located as it was along the left bank of the Green River in the northwest corner of Colorado, it seems to have been a crossroads place, more or less secluded and visited, at sometime or other, by most of the famous Mountain Men of that era. Since Craig was one of the owners, and, therefore, frequently found there, I felt that a description of the fort, as given by several of its visitors, should be set forth in this study; also a word about the other two owners; and some references to visits involving Craig.

The date of the founding of Fort Davy Crockett has not been definitely determined. Brown's Hole, the mountain-walled valley that was the site of the post, had long been a favorite winter resort for the Indians. In this grassy retreat the Indian bands sought shelter from the storms that swept the surrounding mountains.

The most exhaustive study that has been made of Fort Davy Crockett is the one reported in the January, 1952 issue of the *Colorado Magazine*, published by the State Historical Society of Colorado. This report is by Leroy R. Hafen. He quotes T. J. Farnham as follows:

¹⁵ Francis Haines, *The Nez Perces*, University of Oklahoma Press, p. 52.

Thomas Jefferson Farnham, leader of an Oregon-bound party from Peoria, Illinois, reached the post on August 12, 1839, after some rugged experiences in crossing northwestern Colorado. He writes that the Fort is a hollow square of one story, with roofs and floors of mud, constructed in the same manner as those of Fort Bent on the Arkansas River. Around these we found the conical skin lodges of the squaws of the white trappers, who were away on their "fall hunt", and also the lodges of a few snake Indians, who had preceded their tribes to this, their winter haunt. Here also were the lodges of Mr. Robinson, a trader, who usually stations himself here to traffic with the Indians and white trappers. His skin lodge was his warehouse; and buffalo robes were spread upon the ground and counter, on which he displayed butcher knives, hatchets, powder, lead, fish-hooks, and whiskey. In exchange for these articles he receives beaver skins from the trappers, money from travelers, and horses from the Indians. And, indeed, when all the independent trappers are driven, by approaching winter, into this delightful retreat, and the whole Snake village, two or three thousand strong, impelled by the same necessity, pitch their lodges around the Fort, and the dances and merry makings of a long winter are thoroughly commenced, there is no want of customers.¹⁶

Five days after the arrival of Farnham, an east-bound party, returning from Fort Hall, of present Idaho, reached Brown's Hole. Among the new arrivals was F. A. Wislizenus, a German doctor from St. Louis. In his book, written originally in German and giving an account of his journey, Dr. Wislizenus said:

On August 17, we reached Fort Crockett. It is situated close by the Green River, on its left bank. The river valley here is broad, and has good pasturage and sufficient wood. The fort itself is the worst thing of the kind that we have seen on our journey. It is a low one-story building constructed of wood and clay, with three connecting wings, and no enclosure. Instead of cows the fort had only some goats. In short, the whole establishment appeared somewhat poverty stricken, for which reason it is known to the trappers by the name of Fort Misery. The fort belongs to three Americans: Thompson, Craig, and Sinclair. The latter was at the fort, and received us very kindly but regretted his inability to offer us any supplies.¹⁷

The excellent journal of E. Willard Smith gives valuable observations on Fort Davy Crockett and its owners. Smith came to the Rockies in the summer of 1839 with the Vasquez

¹⁶ T. J. Farnham, "Travels in the Great Western Prairies" in R. G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1841-1857*, pp. 253-254.
¹⁷ F. A. Wislizenus, *A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1839*, St. Louis 1841, p. 129.

and Sublette Company. At Fort Vasquez on the South Platte, near the present site of Platteville, he joined a company that was heading for Fort Davy Crockett. Under date of September 16, Smith recorded: "Today we left our encampment, and started to cross the mountains. Our party consisted of eight men, two squaws, and three children. One of the squaws belonged to Mr. Thompson, the other to Mr. Craig. They were partners and have a trading post at Brown's Hole, a valley on the west side of the mountain".¹⁶

On October 1, they reached Brown's Hole, where Smith remained until mid-winter. Sinclair had been at the fort during the absence of his two partners.

Craig's partner, Philip F. Thompson, according to his sworn statement, Affidavit of Settlers on Unsurveyed Lands," National Archives, was born in Williamson County, Tennessee, in 1811. In early life he went to the Rocky Mountains and in 1842 came to Oregon. Of Thompson's youth and his early years in the mountains, we have no record. He was at Brown's Hole in the summer of 1837 according to Kit Carson and Doc Newell, and from there went on a trading expedition to the Navajo Indians. The mules, he and Sinclair procured in this venture, Thompson disposed of at Fort Vasquez on the South Platte. The goods received for the mules he brought back to Fort Davy Crockett to trade with the Indians.

Thompson went down the Arkansas River and to the Missouri frontier for supplies in the spring of 1839. He returned with his goods in the supply cavern of Sublette and Vasquez, leaving Independence, Missouri, on August 6, 1839, and reaching Fort Vasquez September 13.

From South Platte Post Thompson and his partner Craig, with their Indian wives and children, crossed the mountains to their Fort in Brown's Hole.

Of Sinclair, third partner in the ownership of Fort Davy Crockett, little is known. Of his hospitality Mr. Franham writes in 1839: "I enjoyed the lovely scene at Fort Davy Crockett till near midnight in company with Mr. Sinclair; and

¹⁶ E. H. Allen (Ed.), "With Fur Traders in Colorado, 1839-40: the Journal of E. Willard Smith", in the *Colorado Magazine*, XXVII (1950), p. 112.

when at last its excitements and the thrilling pleasure of being relieved from the prospect of death by hunger allowed me to slumber, that gentleman conducted me to his own room and bed, and bade me occupy both while I should remain with him"¹⁹

According to H. H. Bancroft, Prouett Sinclair went to California in 1843.²⁰ In December, 1851 the California State Library reported that Prouett Sinclair, who had gone to the Rockies from Arkansas in 1830, settled at Cowalitos, in Santa Cruz County, California, in 1843 and was an active business man there until 1882. The Santa Cruz County Great Register of 1888 lists him as 77 years old and born in Tennessee.²¹ This was no doubt the partner, since his brother Alexander was killed at the battle of Pierce's Hole in 1832.

Edwin L. Sabin in *Kit Carson Days* has the following reference to Fort Davy Crockett and its owners:

Myeth's Fort Hall had been sold, the summer of 1837 to the British. Under the new proprietors it engaged some of the American Trappers, but Fort Davy Crockett, in Brown's Hole, Colorado, on an elbow of the Green courteously managed by the mountain men, William Craig, Philip Thompson, and Sinclair, was the fashionable American gathering place. Thither, after the rendezvous of this summer, journeyed Kit Carson and seven others. Thompson and Sinclair were organizing a trading trip into the Navajo country of present New Mexico, and Carson joined them. This was a trip not after furs, but after horses and mules, and the Navajo merchandise of ropes and blankets. The latter article especially was valued, and it is valued today. Substantial, warm, waterproof, of pleasant pattern, the Navajo blanket early appealed to the Mexican and traveler over the Santa Fe Trail, was made popular by the American soldiers of the days of 1846, and has maintained itself as a Navajo asset ever since.

Out of the Navajo Country, with its peach orchards and ranging flocks, the traders proceeded to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, where the spoils, principally mules, were sold for the Missouri Market. This winter of 1837-1838 Kit Carson spent in Brown's Hole as hunter for Fort Davy Crockett.²²

Since Joe Meek and Doc (Robert) Newell were intimates of

¹⁹ Farquhar's "Trapper", pp. 418, p. 422.

²⁰ H. H. Bancroft, *History of California*, IV, p. 430; V, p. 709.

²¹ L. E. Eaton, (Ed.) *Colorado Magazine*, X, 1/2, January 1922, p. 24.

²² Edwin L. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*, A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago, 1914, pp. 171, 172.

William Craig, we are here reporting a reference from DeVoto's book, *Across the Wide Missouri*:

Joe was on his way to Fort Davy Crockett and his wife and his partner Newell. He had a shoulder of antelope and in the mountain code offered them breakfast. They had eaten, however, and what they wanted was instruction—the type held true at this meeting. Joe said there was a village of Nez Perces only a day's ride beyond Fort Hall. He himself was going to winter with them when he could get his wife. (A Nez Perce whom he called Virginia; she was to bear him eight children.) He advised the greenhorns to join the village, too, and travel with it to the Nez Perce Country where there was a mission, Spalding's Lapwai. The lava and the peaks, the rivers and the gulches, the sagebrush and the thirst—the country between Bear River and Trail's End was in Joe's mind and he thought, gently, that they would need the Nez Perces.

Farnham thought him much like an Indian: 'The same wild, unsettled, watchful expression of the eye, the same unnatural gesticulation in conversation, the same unwillingness to use words when a sign, a contortion of the face or body, or movement of the hand will manifest thought: in standing, walking, reading, in all but complexion he was an Indian'. He cursed the American Fur Company for them. It had used his skill, risked his life, paid him little, and now cast him off. Every trapper whom Farnham had met—a good many—had said the same. And he looked poor. It was starving times for Joe Meek. He had so sparse and worn an outfit that the wind, which can be cold of an August morning in Bear River Valley, made him shake like an aspen leaf.

Let them watch out for Blackfeet, Joe said. There were some near Soda Springs, which they would presently reach. Farther along they would find Joe's White horse. It had given out and he had had to cache its pack.

Joe Meek, the bear killer, a Carson man, a Bridger man, a Rocky Mountain Fur Company Man—Joe Meek, free trapper, raised his hand and rode off toward Fort Davy Crockett. And the three greenhorns, authentic settlers, and their Snake guide took the trail again, toward the Columbia.²³

The ultimate fate of the fort is unknown. The wooden structure may have been destroyed by fire, for evidence of the building disappeared. In fact, ranchmen who later settled in Brown's Hole swore that no such post as Fort Davy Crockett ever existed in the valley. Brown's Hole was again the setting

²³ Edward DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, pp. 263, 264.

for lively activity a few decades later, when cattle rustlers made it a notorious hideout.

The year 1840, which saw the last fur trade rendezvous of the mountains, apparently witnessed also the abandonment of Fort Davy Crockett. The partnership of Thompson, Craig, and Sinclair broke up. Craig trekked to Oregon in the summer of 1840. Thompson followed him two years later. Sinclair is reported to have settled in California in 1843.

Andrew Sublette led a company of health seekers out over the Oregon Trail and to Green River in the summer of 1844. They left Independence on May 12,²⁴ and in August turned down Green River to Brown's Hole. No data have been found as to whether or not they reached their destination and how they fared. But Andrew Sublette was back on the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers next spring.

John C. Fremont upon returning from the Pacific Coast on his second exploring expedition reached Brown's Hole on June 7, 1844. "This sheltered valley", he wrote, "was formerly a favorite wintering ground for the trappers." Carson, who accompanied Fremont, had spent much time at Fort Davy Crockett and must have told his chief something of the Fort's history. But nothing of this is recorded in Fremont's official report. The pathfinder merely recorded that his encampment was opposite to the remains of an old fort on the left bank of the river.²⁵

Life in Idaho Territory

It is understandable that many of the Mountain Men would give up the life of trapper and seek to settle in the desirable areas that they had learned to know. There was no longer, after 1840, so great a demand for beaver skins as in the decade just closed. Also, it was becoming increasingly more difficult to find spots, in the mountains fastnesses, where beaver could be found in quantity as in former years. With one accord they agreed that it was essential to seek the settlements. Since many of these men had friendly relations with the Nez Perce Indians

²⁴ Letters of Andrew Sublette to his brother, William, written May 13, 1844 and March 2 and 6, 1845.
²⁵ J. C. Fremont, "Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, etc.", (Washington 1845), pp. 273-24.

and had wives from that tribe, and were favorably impressed with the country of the Nez Perce Indians, they quite naturally headed for that country. And in as much as there was not yet a boundary settlement in the disputed Oregon country, between Great Britain and the United States, it is not unlikely that some of these men wanted to help perfect the claim of the United States to that territory. I quote from H. H. Bancroft:

As it was now absolutely necessary to seek the settlements in order to live, seven of them determined to go to Oregon with their Indian wives and children, about their only worldly possessions, and begin life anew. Their names were Robert Newell, C. M. Walker, J. L. Meek, William Craig, Caleb Wilkins, William M. Doty, and John Larison. Newell, Meek and Wilkins decided to make for the Columbia River. . . .

Craig remained in the upper country and settled at Lapwai, while Meek and Newell proceeded to the Dalles on horseback, leaving their wagons to be brought on at the earliest opportunity.²⁶

It was natural that William Craig would settle near Lapwai, Idaho. He was married to Isabel, daughter of Chief James, who was chief of the Nez Perce Indians in the Lapwai Valley. This made it possible for him to learn the Nez Perce language and to understand the customs, attitudes, and beliefs of the tribe. Spalding, the missionary, located along the Clearwater River, near Lapwai, in 1836. Many of the Nez Perce tribe attended his mission school, and in other ways came under his influence. With the coming of Spalding, the influence of Chief James over his people lost strength. This is, no doubt, the chief cause for an enmity between Chief James and Spalding. William Craig and Missionary Spalding did not get along well as neighbors. Craig's kinship with Chief James and his years "Roughing It" as a Mountain Man may have been the leading factors that promoted their mutual dislike for each other; but more about this later. Craig's usefulness in dealing with the Indians is shown in the following quotations from the book *War Chief Joseph* by Howard and McGrath. Incidentally, Chief Joseph as a boy, attended Spalding's school. His father, Chief Joseph had been baptized by Spalding.

Soon after the Whitman Massacre, November 29, 1847, regular troops and several companies of volunteers were sent to cam-

²⁶ H. H. Bancroft, Vol. XXIX, *History of Oregon*, Vol. 1, 1834-1848, pp. 241, 242.

paign against the Cayuses in revenge for the murder of the whites; when guilty members of the Cayuse tribe fled into the hills, some of the volunteers suspected the Nez Perces of abetting their escape and favored an attack upon the latter. For a while it seemed that the innocent Nez Perces would be involved in the trouble. With the arrival of Colonel Gilliam and his regulars at Wailatpu, a council was arranged through the efforts of William Craig, who acted in behalf of the Nez Perces. This meeting was attended by 250 warriors [sic] led by Tu-eka-kas (Joseph), who approached the council under the American flag and carried a New Testament in his hand as proof of his good faith toward the Americans.

General Palmer, Indian Agent for Oregon, was favorably impressed by the attitude of the Nez Perces, and told them to return to their homes for the spring planting, and to continue their peaceful relations with the whites. . . .²⁷

Concerning Governor Stevens' Council Meeting of 1855:

Next to arrive, after several days' delay, were the Cayuses; then came the Walla Wallas, the Umatillas, and the Yakimas. All tribes but the Palouses were represented. Five Thousand Indians and a mere handful of white officials, attended by a military escort of 47 dragoons under Lieutenant Archibold Gracie, were present at the council. It was probably the greatest peace gathering of Indians ever held in the west. Besides Governor Stevens there were present, his thirteen-year-old son, Hazard; General Joel Palmer; Secretaries James Doty and William C. McKay; Agents R. R. Thompson, R. B. Metcalfe, R. H. Crosby, N. Olney, and R. H. Lansdale; Packmaster C. P. Higgins, the army escort; and interpreters William Craig, N. Raymond, Mat Dampher, and John Flette.²⁸

The difficulties between Chief James and Missionary Spalding and the possible influence on Craig are well presented by Francis Haines in his book, *The Nez Perces*:

Chief James and Henry Spalding did not get along too well. Spalding had taken over the local medicine practice depriving James of revenue. Spalding told the Indians that James and the other medicine men got their power from the devil and all their patients were in danger of eternal damnation. He also refused to pay James any rent for the land used by the mission. . . . James had an additional grievance. As Chief of Lapwai, he did not approve of the influx of Indians from other villages. The old tribal custom had explicitly reserved a village site for members of the local band. Now there were

²⁷ Howard and McGrath, *War Chief Joseph*, the Clayton Printers, Ind., 1932, pp. 26, 27.
²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.